

## **Kentucky Environmental Education Council**

**Summer Meeting July 25th, 2007**

**Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill**

**Harrodsburg, KY**

### **Minutes of the Meeting**

Members Present: Alan Branscum, Horace Brown, Frances Carter, James Funk, Wade Helm, Greg Higdon, Cheryl Messenger

Members not present: Greg Higdon, Kurt Mason, Evelyn Morgan

Staff: Jane Eller, John LeFevre, Maria Zoretic

Mr. Brown, the Council Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Since there was a quorum, Mr. Branscum made a motion to approve the spring meeting minutes. Ms. Messenger seconded the motion and all Council members were in favor.

**Board Appointments** - The Education Cabinet general counsel's office notified Ms. Eller that legislators are unable to serve on the Council.

**Budget Review** - Mr. LeFevre informed members that the Council received revenues in the amount of \$1,119,999.57 for fiscal year 2007 ending June 30, 2007. The Council spent \$1,147,687.60 in fiscal year 2007. The Council was able to spend more money than it received for fiscal year 2007 because of its carryover funding from 2006. Without carryover funding, the agency would operate in a deficit.

Ms. Eller informed members that the Council will have increased revenues in fiscal year 2008 since the Council retains 7% of the Pride funds for administrative services. This amounts to \$70,000 this fiscal year. and Council staff would like to use the additional funding for three different purposes. The bulk of the monies would be to support the coordinator's salary for the Green and Healthy Schools Program and the EE in Kentucky site. Ms. Eller suggested that a portion of the funding be used to give grants to schools participating in Kentucky's Green and Healthy School program. In addition, Ms. Eller suggested that the remainder of the funds be set aside to help offset the cost of the upcoming Environmental Literacy Survey and master plan in 2009. All Council members were in favor of Ms. Eller's recommendations.

**National Standards** - Ms. Carter made a motion for the Council to approve the use of North American Association for Environmental Education national environmental education standards. Mr. Helm seconded the motion and all Council members were in favor.

### **KUPEE/Pride monies –**

- a. KEEC, along with KUPEE, is exploring a collaborative effort between the Universities and a national nonprofit organization called Earth Force. Dr. Terry Wilson of Western Kentucky University has developed a working relationship with Earth Force and Earth Force has expressed interest in collaborating with Kentucky in a statewide project. Although Pride monies would be used to fund the collaborative project this year, if the project is successful, Earth Force would help raise funds for future KUPEE collaborative projects.
- b. Ms. Eller provided each Council member with a binder containing all of the reports submitted by each university that has used Pride funding since its inception in 2004.
- c. Endorsement - Ms. Eller notified Council members that seven universities will have the endorsement in place by the spring of 2008.
- d. Ms. Eller informed members that she was working diligently to find an evaluator for the current Pride fund project. In addition, a videographer was being considered to create a video using new Pride funds that highlights the how Pride funding has significantly impacted and improved each university's environmental education impact in their respective service regions.

**Certification Continuing Education & Accreditation** - Ms. Eller informed Council members that the continuing education component of certification had been implemented and that the Council had received 24 continuing education plans from graduates.

**Green & Healthy Schools** - Ms. Zoretic reviewed the Green & Healthy Schools website with Council members. The official kickoff for the program will take place in August.

**EE in Kentucky Website Progress** - Ms. Eller informed Council members that the EE in Kentucky website was progressing and that the Council was currently marketing the site to increase its membership and usage.

**Transportation Project** - Ms. Eller informed Council members that the Transportation Cabinet approved the MOA with KEEC in the amount of \$220,000. The Council will use the funds to hire two additional staff members that will work on a new project to expand the KYTC public education and information portion of the EPA's Phase II, MS4 project. The two employees hired for the positions are Yvonne Meichtry, a professor from Northern Kentucky University (and former Council member) and Julie Gee, formerly of Western Kentucky University. The two employees will assist the MS4 communities to conduct public education and information programs and to evaluate those programs. The Council is working in collaboration with Kentucky State University to complete the hiring of the two individuals.

## **Master Plan Review**

**1. Environmental literacy should be a required part of teacher certification.**

- **Kentucky has fulfilled this portion of the Master Plan.**

**2. The Department of Education should hire a full-time environmental education consultant who works to infuse environmental education into the Curriculum.**

- **This portion of the Master Plan has not been accomplished.**

**3. Environmental education content, materials, and programs should be Standards-based.**

- **Both the Master Plan and certification have been instrumental in communicating this need across the state.**

**4. Professional development opportunities should be provided that help teachers learn content and pedagogy related to environmental education. Professional Development for teaching about the environment should be based on the Program of Studies and Academic Expectations and should conform to the professional Development standards produced by the Department of Education and by local schools and school districts.**

- **The environmental education endorsement for teachers accomplishes this portion of the Master Plan.**

**5. Environmental education content, materials and programs should be based on criteria listed below. Environmental Education should:**

- be standards based
- contain hands-on activities that lead to problem solving and critical thinking
- have community-based instruction
- be interdisciplinary
- include authentic assessments
- be age appropriate
- use inquiry-based approaches
- use scientific processes to study interactive systems
- serve all students
- promote independent thinking
- address social, cultural, and physical diversity
- **All of the activities of the Council are geared toward this goal and we are making real progress.**

**6. Kentucky schools and school districts should implement policies and**

programs that support a healthy learning environment as well as model appropriate environmental practices. Such policies and programs can teach by example and encourage behaviors that balance environmental protection with lifestyle choices.

- Kentucky's new Green and Healthy Schools program takes a big step in helping to accomplish this portion of the Master Plan.

7. Meaningful environmental education requires immersion into the natural environment in which a particular student lives.

- This is a philosophical underpinning of much of the Council's work.

8. The statewide network of environmental education centers should be maintained and supported at each state university to promote coordination, collaboration and consistency in their respective areas of the state, as well as to:

- Prepare educators and future leaders
- Coordinate regional services, including working with other institutions of higher education in their areas.
- Develop programs and curricula
- Conduct and disseminate research
  - Two environmental education centers have grown to eight. All eight state universities currently maintain a center for environmental education.

9. Colleges and universities in Kentucky, including those in KCTCS, should make environmental education an integral part of general education requirements. Collaborative interdisciplinary courses need to be developed that link ecology and other natural sciences, social sciences, the humanities, and teacher education. We recommend that the Council on Postsecondary Education work with administrators and appropriate faculty committees at Kentucky's colleges to integrate education about the environment into the general education requirements. In order to assist in this process, the centers for environmental education should be placed administratively to best facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration.

- At this point, the University of Kentucky and KSU are the only institutions of higher learning that have taken steps toward making environmental education a part of the general education requirements. However, several of the courses created at the other institutions to support the Endorsement are also taken by non education majors.

10. Kentucky teachers must be better prepared to teach about the environment. This preparation requires significantly higher levels of environmental literacy and demonstrated competency in environmental education instructional methods. The Kentucky Education and Professional Standards Board has taken two significant steps toward this goal. The first is the requirement that all teacher preparation programs in Kentucky include environmental education in the curriculum. The second is the creation of

the environmental education endorsement, which allows teachers to specialize in environmental education at the graduate level.

- The Endorsement has helped to fulfill this portion of the Master Plan. The Earth force project and Green and healthy Schools Program will further enhance teacher competence in EE. The new NCATE standards for EE will codify this process.

11. State, federal and local agencies should organize cooperative, collaborative, interdisciplinary programs to improve adult environmental literacy. One goal of these programs should be behavior that results in an improved environment.

- The Council's collaborative project with the Transportation Cabinet helps to fulfill this portion of the Master Plan.

12. A survey of the environmental literacy of the general adult population of Kentucky should be conducted every five years.

- The Council contracts with the University of Kentucky research center to conduct the survey.

13. The Kentucky Environmental Education Council should be fully funded, including creating two additional positions for professional staff.

- This portion of the Master Plan remains unfulfilled.

14. The environmental education centers described in recommendation 9 should also house a full time environmental education coordinator whose task is to ensure that the nonformal environmental educators in their region work effectively with the formal education community.

- Ms. Eller recommended that this portion of the Master Plan become a requirement for the environmental education centers.

15. Programs that deliver environmental education should be evaluated regularly.

- The Council places heavy emphasis on evaluation when developing and delivering environmental education programs.

16. A Cabinet-level interagency committee should meet quarterly to ensure that state administered environmental education programs are effective, efficient and accessible.

- All members of the interagency committee meet regularly in an informal setting to coordinate environmental education programs in an effective and efficient manner.

17. The Kentucky Environmental Education Council should provide professional development opportunities for nonformal educators that align with KDE and NAAEE guidelines.

- The Certification Program fulfills this portion of the Master Plan.



**18. Classroom teachers and nonformal environmental educators should collaborate to integrate environmental education throughout the curriculum.**

- **Certification and the Green and Healthy Schools Program help establish stronger relationships between teachers and the EE nonformal community.**

**19. Traditional members of the environmental education community in Kentucky, including the Kentucky Environmental Education Council, the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education, members of the Kentucky Interagency Committee and others, should make concerted efforts to include those who have not traditionally been part of the network but who now offer significant contributions to environmental education. These would include such entities as health educators, community and city planners, and directors of service learning programs, among others.**

- **We are making slow but steady progress on this front. We work much more with planners, architects, engineers and health providers than we did two years ago. However, there is still much room for improvement**

**Adjourn** – Their being no further business, Mr. Helm made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Carter seconded the motion and all Council members approved. The meeting was adjourned.